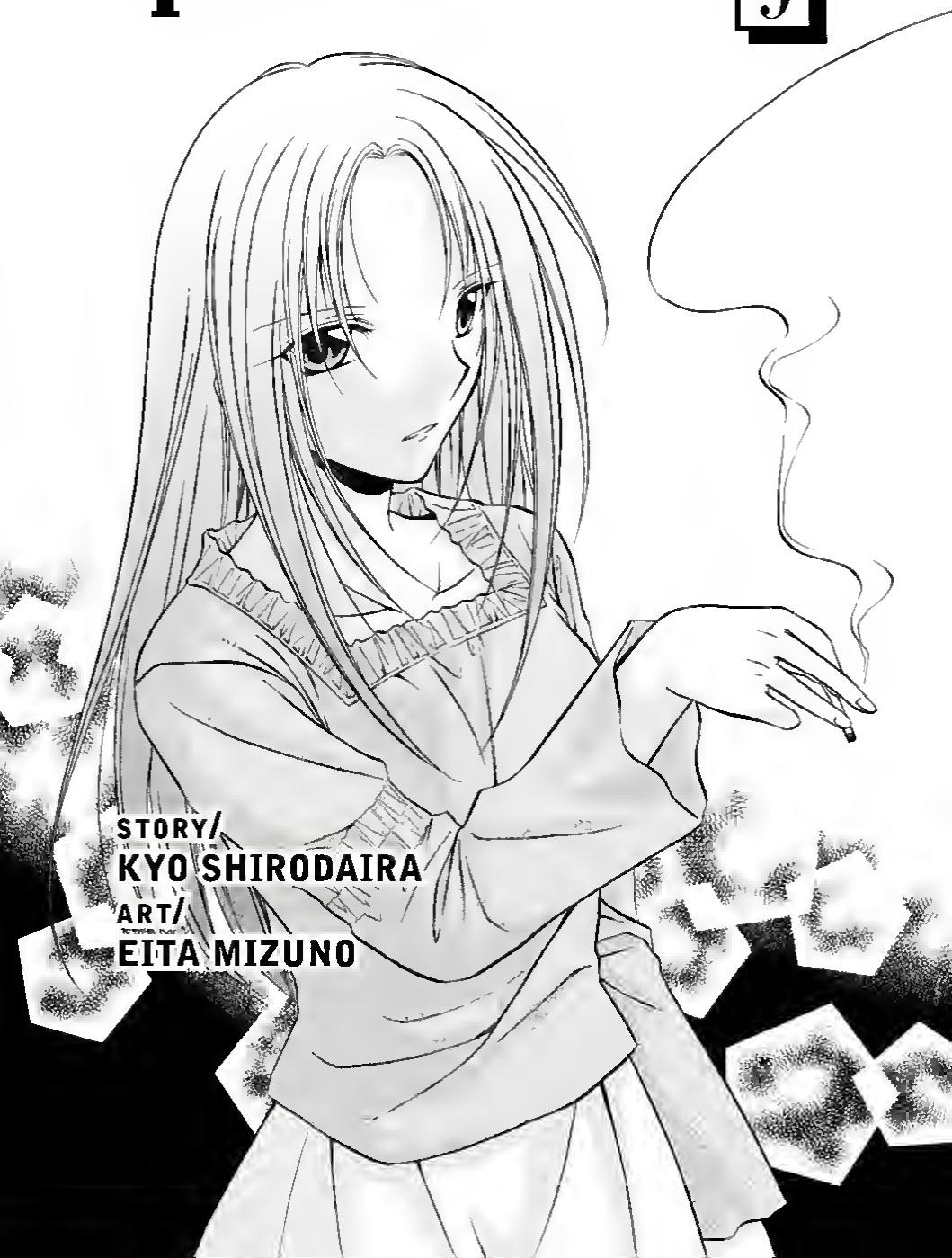
Story by Kyo Shirodaira Art by Eita Mizuno

9

Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING

Spiral THE BONDS OF REASONING 9



STORY/
KYO SHIRODAIRA
ART/
EITA MIZUNO

The SPIRAL:

You will go

The distance

In your eyes

CONTENTS

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE	Footfall	5
CHAPTER FORTY-TWO	The Mote in God's Eye	42
CHAPTER FORTY-THREE	Time Enough for Love	80
CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR	How's Schrödinger's Cat?	111
CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE	The Eagle Has Landed	135
BONUS STORY	Great Detective Kiyotaka Narumi: Kurumi Kohinata's Challenge	175

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE
FOOTFALL

Spiral
THE BONDS OF REASONING

KANON-KUN, WAS IT?
BIG SIS HERE IS GOING TO GIVE YOU THE PUNISHMENT YOU DESERVE.
KIN (SHING)
SU (SWSH)
IF HER NAME'S MADOKA NARUMI, THEN THAT MEANS...
...I CAN'T LET HER EAT UP MY PRECIOUS TIME!

SHIT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY SISTER'S INVOLVED NOW...
IS THIS PART OF MY BROTHER'S SCHEME TOO!?
WHAT OTHER WEAPONS DO YOU HAVE?
HUH?
GA (GRAB)
UH, LET'S SEE...
THIS GUN'S BEEN LOADED WITH ANESTHETIC BULLETS.
IT'S A SEMI-AUTOMATIC.

SHE'S EXACTLY THE TYPE OF PERSON KIYOTAKA-SAMA WOULD CHOOSE!!
CHA (CLACK)
...FOR HAVING JUST JUMPED INTO THIS MESS, SHE'S QUICK TO ADAPT...
KOSO (WHISPER)
KANON-KUN WILL NEVER KILL ANYBODY WHO ISN'T A BLADE CHILD.
SO YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PUSH HIM PRETTY FAR.
I COULD TELL.
ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?
DOWN THIS HALLWAY...

...JUST ACROSS FROM THE CLASSROOM KANON-KUN'S HIDING IN, WE'VE PLANTED EXPLOSIVES.
WON'T THAT KILL HIM?
IF YOU CAN JUST FORCE HIM WITHIN RANGE OF THE TRAP ...
EXPLO-SIVES?
...WE'LL ACTIVATE IT WITH THIS.
AND THIS IS THE DETONATION SWITCH...
THEY'RE NOT FILLED WITH THAT MUCH TNT.
GOSHI (WIPE)
...ONLY THING IS...
WE ONLY WANT TO KNOCK HIM OUT IN THE BLAST AND ITS SUBSEQUENT SHOCK WAVE.
...WE DON'T KNOW IF THAT'LL BE ENOUGH TO TAKE KANON-KUN DOWN OR NOT.

...I'LL GO FREE YOUR BROTHER.
AT ANY RATE, IF YOU CAN JUST BUY ME SOME TIME...
...YOU GUYS SURE ARE COUNTING ON...
...MY LITTLE BROTHER.
LEAVE IT TO ME.
I'M PRETTY TOUGH.
I'VE EVEN SENT KIYOTAKA NARUMI TO THE HOSPITAL BEFORE.

...NOW, THEN...
...HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO HIDE?
...DON'T MAKE ME COME AFTER YOU.
JIRI (STEP)
ZA (DASH)

!!
BYU (WHIP)
HE'S FAST!!
YUSA (CROCK)
KOUSUKE-KUN!?
YUSA
KOUSUKE-KUN!!
UGH...
ARE YOU ALIVE ...!?

...OF COURSE I AM...
MUKU (RISE)
むくっ
ENOUGH ABOUT ME. WHERE'S RYOUKO?
...SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS BUT STILL BREATHING.
AT LEAST IT DOESN'T LOOK FATAL...
SHE'S LOSING TOO MUCH BLOOD!
DAMMIT ...!

...RIO.
WHAT WAS I DOING...
...LEAVING RYOUKO UNPRO-TECTED!?
GIVE ME THE DETONATOR.
SISTER MADOKA'S KEEPING KANON-KUN BUSY FOR US ALREADY.
YOU IDIOT!
SHE CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH ON HER OWN!
DON'T BE CRAZY!
GET OUT OF HERE AND TAKE NARUMI JUNIOR AND RYOUKO WITH YOU.
IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT KANON.

BESIDES, EVEN AFTER THE LITTLE BROTHER'S FREED, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT KANON FOR A WHILE.
WE'LL NEED TIME TO GET REORGANIZED.
BUT—
NO BUTS!
NOW HAND OVER THE DETONATOR!
.....
GYU (GRIP)
PON (PAT)
OZU (TIMID)

GUI (LIFT)
.....
...DON'T...
...DIE ON US, YOU HEAR...?
HA
...SHE CAN'T HEAR...
...YOUR PATHETIC RAMBLINGS.
PATA (DRIP)
PATA TA (DRIP)

KUH! MADOKA NARUMI...
THIS KID...
...KNOWS HOW TO FIGHT!
CHA (CHAK)
SHE'S TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT...!

I'VE LANDED THREE KNIVES IN HER, AND SHE'S NOT FAZED ONE BIT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S GOTTEN THIS FAR!
HERE GOES ...
DA
DA
DA (BLAM)
DA
DA
SA (DODGE)
BA (WHAP)
BI (WHIP)
I'LL FORCE HIM INTO THAT TRAP BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!

SHE CLEARED THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US!?
DA (DASH)
SA (DODGE)
I'VE STILL GOT ANOTHER TRICK UP MY SLEEVE!
ZU (PLUCK)
GA (GRAB)

HYU
(WHOOSH)
PASHI
(CATCH)

GU
(STRAIN)
GU

THIS IS GONNA BE ROUGH!
MY RIGHT HAND HAS NO STRENGTH LEFT!

KACHA (RATTLE)
カチャ
KACHA
カチャ

PLEASE BE PATIENT JUST A LITTLE BIT LONGER.
I'LL HAVE YOU FREE SOON.
HEY, YOU'RE HURT.
I'M FINE!
THOSE WOUNDS LOOK PRETTY BAD...
WE CAN'T FUSS OVER LITTLE SCRATCHES LIKE MINE—!
WE NEED YOU NOW!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP KANON-KUN!
YOU CAN SAVE US!!

IF YOU GET FREE, I WON'T RESIST YOU KILLING ME.
I MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO SAVE THEM...
ONCE I'M FREE, I CAN STOP HIM.
...IT'S TRUE...
HE SAID THAT IF I GOT FREE HE'D LET ME KILL HIM WITHOUT A STRUGGLE...
...THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO END HIS MADNESS.

...READY TO DO WHAT IT TAKES?
BUT AM I...
...IS THAT THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
...NO, THE QUESTION IS...
STILL ...
IF THAT'S WHAT MY BROTHER PLANNED, THEN...

...WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT...

...I'LL END UP IN A SITUATION WHERE I HAVE TO KILL HIM ANYWAY ...!

.....

IF I LET GO OF THE GUN...

...AND STEP BACK QUICKLY ENOUGH, I CAN TACKLE HIM...!

GAKU (STAGGER)
SUTAN (HOP)
PA (RELEASE)
THEN HE'LL FALL RIGHT INTO THE TRAP!
!!
GASHAN (KACLICK)
PA
A POCKET PISTOL!?
I DON'T THINK SO!!

DAN
DAN
DAN
(BLAM)
ダン
ダン
ダン
POI
(TOSS)
GURA
(STAGGER)
I'LL HAVE MY WAY YET!!

I WON'T LET AYUMU-KUN GET FREE THAT EASILY!!
DA (DASH)
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE!
KANON!!

OUT OF MY WAY!
ASAZUKI!!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
KANON HILBERT!
ピクッ
PIKU (TWITCH)

NO!
HE'S ALREADY FREE..!!?
HERE'S MY CHANCE!
DAN (JUMP)
DON (SLAM)

KUH!!
GORO (ROLL)
ゴロ
GORO
ゴロ
DOU (BAM)
BA (LEAP)
KUN (TUG)

GI (GRIP)
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE.
NIYA (SMIRK)
KAA (FLASH)
KACHIN (CLICK)

ZAWA (CHATTER)
WHAT THE ...!!?
DOON (BOOM)
WHAT WAS THAT!?
ZAWA
OOOH ...
ZAWA
ZAWA
THAT SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD BLAST.

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?
BUT IT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE A VERY POWERFUL EXPLOSION ...
GOHO (COUGH)
GOHO
GOHO
MUKURI (RISE)
むくり!

ARE YOU OKAY!?
YORO (WOBBLE)
よろ?
HEY, YOU!!
TA (DASH)
BA (CLEAN)

HE DIDN'T HESITATE TO JUMP OUT THE WINDOW TO ESCAPE THE BLAST...
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE EVEN SPRAINED HIS ANKLE AFTER LANDING FIVE STORIES DOWN...
HOW IS THAT KIND OF STRENGTH EVEN POSSIBLE!!?
...GUESS THIS IS AS FAR AS MY WILL CAN GET ME...

THE FINAL STEP WILL BE TO LET YOU KILL ME...
...SO THAT YOU CAN GROW...
KOUSUKE!!
BATA
BATA (STOMP)

CALM DOWN, RYOUKO-CHAN!!
KOU-SUKE!!
COME ON!!
HOW DARE YOU GET YOUR ASS KICKED WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!!?
WHY, BROTHER ...?
HE'S STILL BREATHING!!
WHY DOES EVERYBODY HAVE TO SUFFER!!?

GIRI GIRI!
IT'S AS I FEARED. UNLESS I KILL HIM...
...THE CURTAIN WILL NEVER FALL, WILL IT...!?

Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO
THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE

...GUESS I'D BETTER GO SEE AYUMU-KUN.
CHA (SWSH)
...NOW, THEN ...
ZARI (STEP)

...IF YOU DON'T...
...AYUMU-KUN...
...SHOOT WITHOUT HESITATION.
...YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT ANYTHING.

...HE'S COMING RIGHT BACK UP HERE...
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR INDECISION ...
DAMMIT... IS MY ONLY OPTION TO DO WHAT HE SAID...?
...TO SHOOT HIM WITH THIS!?
GU (SQUEEZE)

DOES YOUR SHOULDER HURT...?
AYUMU.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
하아? (GASP)
I'M FINE...
THE BULLET PASSED RIGHT THROUGH.
AND I'VE GOTTEN USED TO THE PAIN.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE BLEEDING TOO HEAVILY, BUT STILL ...
MORE IMPORTANTLY, ABOUT THAT KANON BOY...
쉬 (CROUCH)
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SIS? HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP?

...DID HE MAKE IT?
I SAW HIM ESCAPE THROUGH THE WINDOW, BUT...
...HE'S ON HIS WAY HERE RIGHT NOW.
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.
HE'S COMING TO END THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL.
UGH...

.....
...
OWW
...
MUKU (RISE)
ぅ...
じわぁ
JIWAA (TEARY)
KOUSUKE!!
がばっ
GABA (TACKLE)
AH!
ヤバっ!!
KNOCK IT OFF, RYOUKO!
MY WHOLE BODY'S KILLING ME!
DON'T BE SO ROUGH!

QUIET, YOU DUMMY!
HIKKU (HICCUP)
SERVES YOU RIGHT FOR MAKING ME WORRY LIKE THAT!
KURU (TURN)
SFX: PON (PAT) PON
YORO (STAGGER)

LITTLE BROTHER ...
...WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU TO TAKE CARE OF THE REST.
YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND PLACE ALL YOUR BETS ON ME, BUT...
...WHAT DO YOU REALLY THINK I CAN ACCOMPLISH?
EVERYTHING.
YOU CAN STOP KANON.
YOU CAN SAVE US.
AND YOU CAN CHANGE FATE...

...LISTEN TO YOURSELF.
THIS WHOLE SITUATION WAS ORCHESTRATED BY MY BROTHER.
I'M JUST ANOTHER ONE OF HIS PUPPETS, SO...
...HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SURPASS HIM?
FURU (SHAKE) FURU
IF YOU WANT YOUR WISHES GRANTED, GO TO MY BROTHER.
...BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAN SURPASS KIYOTAKA-SAMA.
THE FATE OF THE BLADE CHILDREN...
...IS SOMETHING NOT EVEN KIYOTAKA-SAMA CAN CHANGE.

WHAT THE BLADE CHILDREN NEED TO BE SAVED ...
...IS A STRENGTH GREATER THAN KIYOTAKA-SAMA'S.
SURE, EVERYTHING MAY HAVE BEEN PLANNED BY KIYOTAKA-SAMA...
...AND YOU MAY BE JUST A "PUPPET," AS YOU PUT IT.
BUT SEVERE TESTS LIKE THIS...
...WILL MAKE YOU GROW.
AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE GROWING ...
...THEN YOU'LL SURPASS KIYOTAKA-SAMA.

YOU'RE SO MUCH LIKE KIYOTAKA-SAMA, BUT YOU'RE NOT HIM.
THAT MAKES YOU THE ONLY ONE WITH A CHANCE AT RISING ABOVE HIM.
IT'LL ALL WORK OUT.
KIYOTAKA-SAMA NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE.
IF YOU JUST PUT YOUR HEART INTO THE FIGHT...
...YOU CAN STOP KANON-KUN...
...EXCEL BEYOND KIYOTAKA-SAMA...
...AND ONE DAY SAVE US.
.....

...MIGHT ACTUALLY BE TRUE.
...WHAT SHE'S SAYING ...
KIYOTAKA-SAN ALWAYS SAID HE FELT THERE WAS A LIMIT TO HIS ABILITIES...
...BUT HE USED TO SAY THAT YOU, IF ANYONE, COULD PUSH PAST THAT LIMIT...
IF THAT'S THE CASE!..
...THE POWER TO DO SO IS SOMEWHERE INSIDE YOU.

...MY BROTHER USED TO SAY THAT, HUH...?
HEARING ALL YOU'VE SAID... MAYBE I AM STRONG...
...BUT I'M SORRY TO SAY...
...MY BROTHER'S LIED TO ALL OF YOU.

EVEN IF I DO HAVE SOME SPECIAL POWER...
...MY BROTHER HAS NO INTENTION OF SAVING YOU.
HE MUST HAVE ANOTHER GOAL IN MIND.
...IF HE REALLY WANTED TO SAVE YOU GUYS...
...HE WOULDN'T BE MAKING ME KILL KANON HILBERT.

...IN THE MIDST OF HIS DESPAIR ...
WHAT ...
...ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
...KANON WANTS A MEANINGFUL DEATH.
AND HE'S REALIZED THAT BEING KILLED BY ME WILL GIVE HIM THAT MEANINGFUL DEATH.
...DECIDED TO DIE THAT WAY.
...THAT'S WHY HE'S...

HE LEFT THIS GUN BEHIND ON PURPOSE...
...SO THAT I'D USE IT ON HIM ONCE I WAS FREE.
HE SAID THAT IF I GOT AWAY, HE'D LET ME KILL HIM WITHOUT A STRUGGLE.

SO EVEN IF I DON'T WANT TO...
IF I DON'T DO IT, HE'LL GO ON A KILLING SPREE.
...MY ONLY CHOICE IS TO KILL HIM.
YOU CAN'T!
YOU CAN'T KILL KANON-KUN!
GUI (GRAB)
NO...
...YOU CAN'T STAIN YOUR HANDS WITH BLOOD!

HOW COULD YOU SAVE US...
...IF YOU BECOME GUILTY OF THE SAME CRIME AS WE ARE!?
...WHAT ELSE CAN I DO...?
EVEN IF I RUN, HE'LL COME AFTER ME.
IF I HESITATE ...
...HE'LL KILL YOU ALL.
...IF I CONTINUE TO WAVER ...
...THERE'S NO DOUBT HE'LL GO AFTER MY SISTER...
... ANYTHING TO FORCE ME INTO ACTION.

I WON'T BE ABLE TO SAVE ANYBODY...
IF I DON'T KILL HIM LIKE HE ASKED...
...HIS MADNESS WON'T STOP.
...IF I CAN'T EVEN PROTECT ANY OF YOU RIGHT NOW.
IT'LL ONLY MEAN MORE SACRIFICES.

I'M HELPLESS.
SO JUST CALM DOWN AND ACCEPT IT.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE THE TIME TO FLOUNDER IN MY HELP-LESSNESS.
MY BROTHER'S ARRANGED EVERYTHING ...
...SO THAT MY ONLY OPTION IS TO KILL HIM.
... BUT ...

BUT IF ANYONE CAN PULL OFF A MIRACLE, IT'S YOU, LITTLE BROTHER!
YOU CAN MAKE A MIRACLE HAPPEN!
...A MIRACLE, HUH?
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MIRACLES.
EVEN IF THERE WAS, THAT POWER WOULD BELONG TO MY BROTHER...
...NOT ME.

FROM THE VERY START...
...I NEVER TRUSTED THAT KIYOTAKA.
HA...
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
...KOU-SUKE...
HETAN (SLUMP)
.....
SU (SWSH)

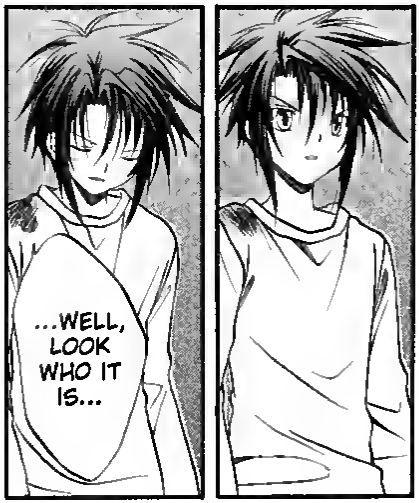
AT LEAST LET ME SETTLE THIS WHERE THERE'S NOBODY AROUND.
I DON'T WANT ANYBODY ...
...TO HAVE TO SEE ME KILL A MAN.
.....
...SHOULD I JUST LET HIM BECOME A MURDERER?
IS THIS REALLY WHAT KIYOTAKA-SAN WANTS?
BUT WHEN I LOOK AT THE FACTS...

...THERE REALLY IS NO OTHER PATH...
IF EVERYTHING GOES AS KIYOTAKA DEVISED...
...AYUMU-KUN WILL KILL KANON-KUN ANY MINUTE NOW...
SO, EVERYTHING WILL REALLY END AS HE PLANNED?
KIYOTAKA REALLY DIDN'T MAKE ANY MISCALCU-LATIONS?
GIRI (GRIP)

...ONE "SOMETHING" THAT EVEN GOD WASN'T ABLE TO PREDICT...
IF ONLY THERE WAS ONE THING...
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, NARUMI-SAN.

I WON'T LET YOU.

OUT OF MY WAY.
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR JOKES—
THIS IS NO JOKE.


...WELL, LOOK WHO IT IS...

IT'S TOO LATE!
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT'S GONE ON HERE!!
...TOO SOON?
IT'S TOO SOON TO GIVE UP NOW.
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE SITUATION.
AND I STILL SAY IT'S TOO SOON.
.....

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO "LET" ME DO ANYTHING!
... YOU ...
THAT'S ENOUGH! NOW OUT OF MY WAY!!
DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A MURDERER THAT BADLY?
NO, I DON'T!!
BUT THIS IS THE PATH MY BROTHER DREW!
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OUT!
I WON'T LET YOU DISREGARD LOGIC WITHOUT TRYING.
I WON'T LET YOU ADMIT DEFEAT.
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TRIED ANYTHING YET, NARUMI-SAN.
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T PERFORM A MIRACLE ...
...YOU STILL HAVE YOUR POWER OF REASONING.

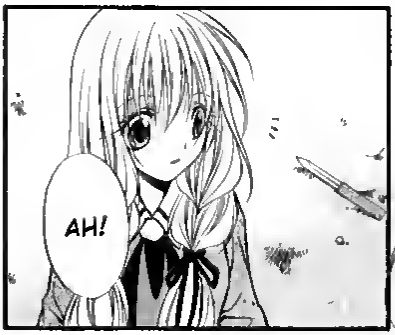
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TRIED ANYTHING YET, NARUMI-SAN.
I WON'T LET YOU DISREGARD LOGIC WITHOUT TRYING.
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T PERFORM A MIRACLE ...
...YOU STILL HAVE YOUR POWER OF REASONING.
I WON'T LET YOU ADMIT DEFEAT.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO "LET" ME DO ANYTHING!
...YOU...
THAT'S ENOUGH! NOW OUT OF MY WAY!!
DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A MURDERER THAT BADLY?
NO, I DON'T!!
BUT THIS IS THE PATH MY BROTHER DREW!
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OUT!

...BEFORE YOU CAME TO THAT CONCLUSION?
DID YOU THINK IT OVER WELL...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ...!!
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SIT BACK AND THINK ABOUT THINGS!!
HE'LL BE BACK HERE IN NO TIME!

Then...
...all you need is more time, right?
NIKO (SMILE)
DOSA (THUD)
.....
SU (CHSMS)

I CAN GIVE YOU TEN MINUTES AT LEAST ...
...WHILE I STALL KANON-SAN DOWN-STAIRS.


AH!

THIS KNIFE SHOULD DO.
I'LL TAKE IT, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

I'M GOING TO BUY YOU SOME TIME.
WHILE I'M GONE, THINK OF A SCENARIO WHERE NOBODY HAS TO DIE!

I'M OFF TO GAIN YOU SOME TIME!
WELL!
YOU CONCENTRATE AND THINK SOMETHING UP, 'KAY?
W...—
WAIT ...!
YOU'RE NUTS IF YOU THINK YOU CAN STALL HIM!!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN DO—
GUI (GRAB)

QUIT BLAB-BERING EXCUS-ES!!
DOGO (WHACK)
.....
ZA (SLIDE)

LEAVE THIS TO ME.
AND, NARUMI-SAN...
...YOU DO WHAT YOU CAN.
KURURI (TWIRL)
TA (TAP)
TA
TA
TA

TON
(TMP)
TON.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
...TIME TO START THE MAIN EVENT!

Spiral
THE BONDS OF REASONING

CHAPTER/FORTY-THREE
TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE

.....
ピタ?
PITA (STOP)?
WHO'S THERE?

YOU FOUND ME.
...AWW. DARN IT.
.....
ひょこ
HYOKO (POP)

WHAT ELSE?
I'M HERE TO STALL YOU...
...AND BUY TIME FOR THE OTHERS.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

UNTIL NARUMI-SAN THINKS OF A WAY TO END THIS FESTIVAL...
...WITHOUT ANYBODY HAVING TO DIE.
THAT STUPID GIRL!
THERE'S NO WAY SHE CAN GIVE US MORE TIME.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GUI (TUG)
KOU-SUKE ...
YORO (STAGGER)
.....
THE LITTLE LADY'S BAG...
THERE MUST BE A FIRST-AID KIT INSIDE.
WE CAN AT LEAST BANDAGE OUR WOUNDS.
R—
RIGHT ...
GOOD IDEA...

I'LL HELP TOO.
...HEY.
NARUMI JUNIOR.
HOW LONG YOU GONNA KEEP THIS UP?

THAT LITTLE LADY GAVE US TEN MINUTES.
YOU JUST GOING TO WASTE THEM LIKE THIS?
...CAN BUY US THAT MUCH TIME...?
...YOU REALLY THINK SHE...
NO, I DON'T...
...BUT...
...IF SHE ACTUALLY DOES...
...AND YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING WITH IT...

...HOW ON EARTH COULD YOU ...
...MAKE IT UP TO HER?
...BUT...
.....
BUT IN THE FACE OF KANON'S OVER-POWERING VIOLENCE...
...WHAT GOOD'S MY LOGIC!?
IT'S NO USE ...!
GUI (GRAB)

BUT THAT'S ...
...ALL YOU'VE GOT, RIGHT!?
BESIDES, LOOK AROUND YOU.

YOU'VE GOT RIO...
...RYOUKO...
...AND YOUR SISTER HERE.
YOU MAY BE HELPLESS ON YOUR OWN, BUT...
...WE'VE ALL GOT YOUR BACK, SO THAT'S GOTTA COUNT FOR SOMETHING.
EVEN THIS GUY HERE...
...COULD AT LEAST SHIELD YOU FROM THE BULLETS.

SU (SWSH)
USE US HOWEVER YOU WANT...
WE'LL PUT OUR LIVES ON THE LINE IF YOU NEED US TO.
...YOU'RE OUR LEADER.
SEE...

NO COMPLAINTS FROM ANYONE, RIGHT?
COME UP WITH A PLAN OF ATTACK ...
...AND TELL US WHAT TO DO.
THAT SHOULD GIVE YOUR LOGIC SOMETHING TO WORK WITH.
.....
I'M NOT EXPECTING MUCH.
...BUT IF ANYBODY CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...
...IT'S YOU.

AND, NARUMI-SAN, YOU DO WHAT YOU CAN.
.....
SHIT ...!
WHO DO THEY ALL THINK THEY ARE?

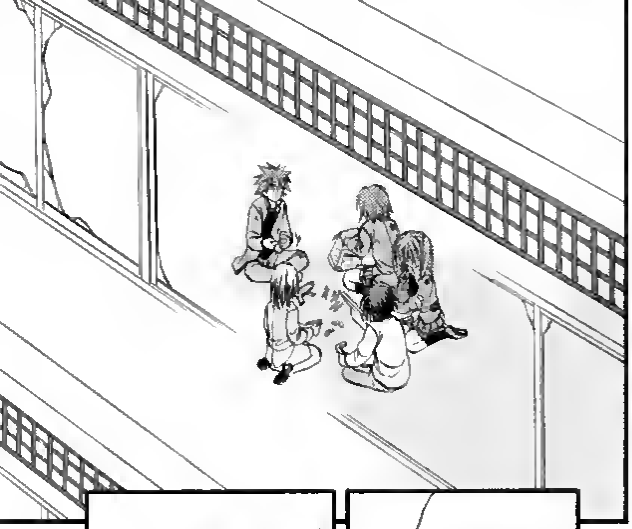
I WANT TO KNOW THIS SITUATION INSIDE OUT.
...GIMME A RUNDOWN OF THE WEAPONS WE STILL HAVE...
...AND ANY OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION YOU CAN.
I'M GOING TO NEED EVERY-BODY'S HELP.
GOTO (THUNK)
SUKKU (RISE)

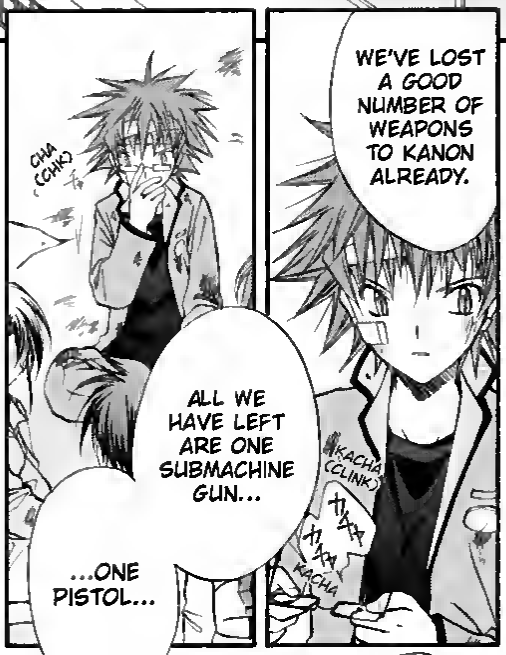
WITH ALL THE LOCKED FIRE DOORS, I THOUGHT IT FELT LIKE I WAS HAVING TO TAKE THE LONG WAY AROUND...
WE'RE GOING TO USE MY REASONING...
...TO LAUNCH AN OFFENSE AGAINST KANON HILBERT!
HA...
SORRY, BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS YOUR STALLING GOES.
YOU WON'T LAST MORE THAN TEN SECONDS.
SO IT WAS ALL YOUR DOING, HUH?
BINGO.

I WON'T ARGUE THAT YOU'RE NOT THE STANDARD FARE.
HOW RUDE!
ぷう
PUU (PUFF)
I'M TOUGHER THAN I LOOK.
LAST TIME, YOU ATTACKED ME FROM THE REAR...
...AND PUT UP A PRETTY GOOD FIGHT.
THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP ME AT THIS POINT...
...IS ME, AND ME ALONE.
THIS TIME I CAN'T AFFORD TO PLAY WITH MY KILL.
CHA! (CLACK)
BUT THIS TIME...
...THINGS WON'T GO SO EASILY FOR YOU...

AND EVEN IF YOU DO STALL ME, THE OUTCOME WILL BE THE SAME EITHER WAY...
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY AYUMU-KUN CAN PROTECT EVERYONE ...
...UNLESS HE KILLS ME.
...IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU...
...THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST WAIT TEN MORE MINUTES?
IF IT'S THE SAME TO ME, I WANT TO AVOID WASTING TIME.

STEP ASIDE.
OR ELSE I'LL SHOOT!!
...GO AHEAD, IF YOU THINK YOU CAN...
YOUR VIOLENT THREATS ...
...WON'T GET YOU PAST ME!




WE'VE LOST A GOOD NUMBER OF WEAPONS TO KANON ALREADY.
CHA (CHK)
ALL WE HAVE LEFT ARE ONE SUBMACHINE GUN...
...ONE PISTOL...
KACHA (CLINK)
TAAA
TAAA
TACHA

...THREE DUMMY HAND GRENADES ...
I TAKE IT THE THREE SMALL ONES ARE THE ANESTHETIC WEAPONS?
...AND SIX KNIVES.

.....

PROBABLY THE ONE I DROPPED.
SHE DID ME THE FAVOR OF PICKING IT UP.
MUST BE ANOTHER ANESTHETIC ONE.
THERE WAS ONE ONE MORE GUN IN HER BAG.
WAIT ...
THIS DOESN'T GIVE ME MUCH HOPE FOR TAKING ON KANON-KUN...
AND THE LITTLE BROTHER'S THE ONLY ONE IN ANY SHAPE TO MOVE AROUND.
WE HAVE TWO SPARE MAGAZINES LEFT FOR THE SUB-MACHINE.

WHAT'S WITH THESE CAT EARS AND GLOVES?
THIS IS OUR SECRET WEAPON.
THEY'D MAKE AN IMPENETRABLE DEFENSE AGAINST KANON-KUN SINCE HE'S SUCH A SUCKER FOR CATS—
GO (WHACK)
THIS IS NO TIME FOR YOUR STUPID NONSENSE!!
IT'S NOT STUPID!
EVEN A SARDINE'S HEAD CAN WORK MIRACLES IF YOU JUST BELIEVE IN IT!!
CAT EARS FOREVER!
GYA (CRAWR)
PIPE DOWN.

I KNOW WE DON'T HAVE MUCH HOPE AND WE'RE CRAZY TO EVEN TRY...
...BUT I'VE MADE UP MY MIND. I'M GOING TO DO THIS.
I DON'T CARE WHAT MY BROTHER'S AFTER.
WE HAVE TO STOP KANON WITHOUT KILLING HIM.
FRANKLY, EVEN IF THAT'S ALL WE MANAGE TO DO...
...WE CAN CALL OURSELVES THE VICTORS...

NOW, LISTEN UP.
BASICALLY, THERE'RE TWO THINGS WE HAVE TO DO.
RIGHT NOW WE HAVE FOUR ANESTHETIC GUNS...
...THAT CAN IMMOBILIZE HIM IN ONE SHOT.
AT THIS POINT, IT'S FOOLISH TO THINK WE CAN PERSUADE HIM TO SURRENDER.
ONCE WE DO THAT, WE CAN GIVE PERSUASION OR REEDUCATION A TRY.
...CAPTURE AND RESTRAIN HIM...
SO OUR FIRST STEP IS TO FIND A WAY TO...

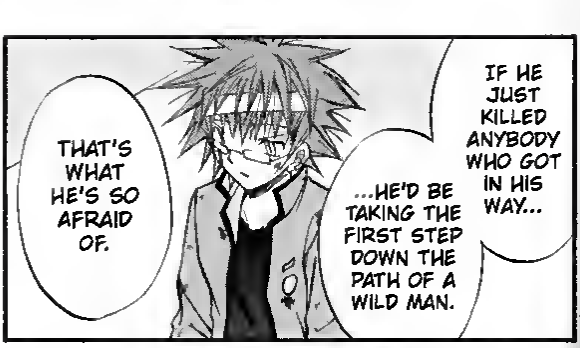
FIRST WE PUMP HIM FULL OF ANESTHETIC BULLETS.
THEN WE HAVE TO KEEP HIM FROM ESCAPING BEFORE THE EFFECTS WEAR OFF.
THAT'S HOW WE'LL WIN.
IT DOES SOUND EASY WHEN YOU BREAK IT DOWN THAT WAY.
BUT NOW OUR PROBLEM IS FINDING SOMEBODY WHO CAN ACTUALLY PULL IT OFF.
I KNOW.
BUT HE MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF WEAKNESS.
WITH ALL THAT ABILITY...
...HE STILL HASN'T MANAGED TO KILL A SINGLE BLADE CHILD.
EVEN WITH ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES HE'S HAD.
THAT TELLS ME THERE'S A CHINK SOMEWHERE.
.....

IT MIGHT BE BECAUSE KANON-KUN...
...HAS SOME UNCONSCIOUS HESITATIONS ABOUT KILLING HIS OWN.
THAT'S HOW EYES AND I...
...MANAGED TO SURVIVE WHEN HE ATTACKED US BEFORE.
THAT MAY BE TRUE, BUT...
...IT'S ONLY THANKS TO SHEER LUCK WE'VE LASTED THIS LONG...
IN FACT, WE'D PROBABLY BE DEAD IF YOUR SISTER HADN'T SHOWN UP.
IT'S NOT LIKE HIS HESITATIONS HOLD HIM BACK LONG ENOUGH TO BE HIS WEAK POINT.
IF WE FACED HIM NOW, HE'D KILL US IN A SPLIT SECOND.
...BUT THERE'S STILL A MOMENT OF HESITATION ...

...THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.
THE LITTLE BROTHER AND HIS SISTER ARE KANON-KUN'S WEAK POINTS.
IT MAY OR MAY NOT BE A HANDICAP...
...WHICH CAN ONLY BE GOOD FOR US.
WOULD HE STICK TO THAT RULE EVEN IF IT'S DO OR DIE?
...BUT...
...THAT'S JUST SOME RULE HE MADE FOR HIMSELF.
HE'S RESTRICTED HIMSELF TO ONLY KILLING BLADE CHILDREN.
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT...

BACK WHEN WE USED TO FIGHT THE HUNTERS ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER...
...KANON STOOD BY HIS RULE ABOUT NOT KILLING UNINVOLVED PARTIES, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT COST HIM.
...IF IT'S SUCH A SETBACK FOR HIM...
...HE'S AFRAID ...
...WHY IS HE SO STUBBORN ABOUT IT?
...AND LOSING HIS MIND TO THE BLOOD-SHED...
HE'S AFRAID OF LOSING HIMSELF TO MURDER ...
SO HE PUT A RESTRAINT ON HIMSELF.
HE'S BOUND SO THAT HE CAN'T KILL INDISCRIMI-NATELY.

KANON-KUN KNOWS EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT SLAYING PEOPLE.
THE METHODS OF MURDER ARE ETCHED IN HIS INSTINCTS...
AND SO KANON-KUN...
...IS CLOSER THAN ANYBODY TO BECOMING A HOMICIDAL MANIAC.
ONE WRONG STEP, AND HE COULD EASILY BECOME A BLOOD-THIRSTY DEMON.
THAT'S WHY YOU COULD SAY THAT KANON...
...IS MORE PURE AND TENTATIVE IN CERTAIN ASPECTS THAN THE REST OF US.


IF HE JUST KILLED ANYBODY WHO GOT IN HIS WAY...
...HE'D BE TAKING THE FIRST STEP DOWN THE PATH OF A WILD MAN.
THAT'S WHAT HE'S SO AFRAID OF.

THAT EXPLAINS WHY HE GOT HIMSELF INTO THIS SITUATION IN THE FIRST PLACE...

SO HE'S DOING WHAT HE CAN...
...TO HOLD ONTO WHATEVER SANITY HE HAS LEFT...

... BUT ...

HE'LL STICK BY THEM EVEN IF IT KILLS HIM.

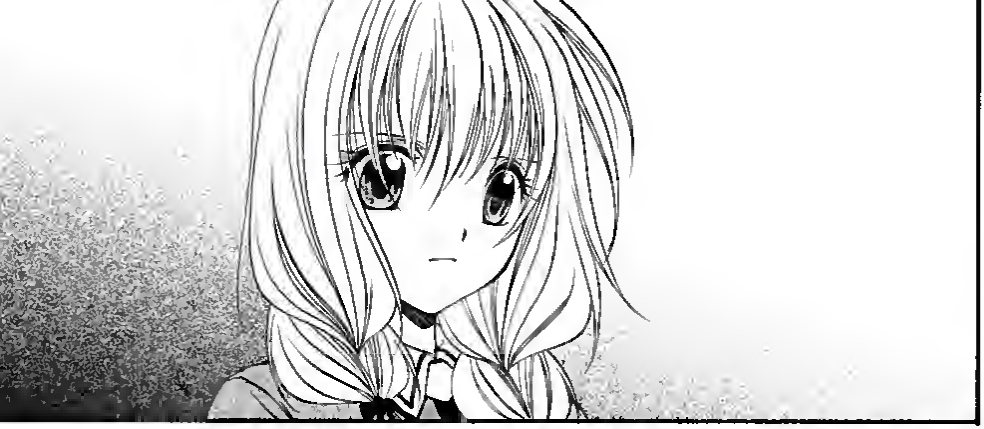
THE RESTRAINTS HE'S PUT ON HIMSELF ...
...GIVE HIM A SENSE OF PRIDE IN HIS HUMANITY.

...EVEN IF HE DOESN'T KILL ME, HE COULD TAKE ME OUT OF THE FIGHT IN AN INSTANT.
SAME GOES FOR AYUMU ...
HIS PRINCIPLE OF SELF-RESTRAINT STILL ISN'T SOMETHING I'D PUT MY FAITH IN.
YEAH ...
NOT YET...
TIME'S NOT UP YET...
THINK... THINK...!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING... SOMETHING!

THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO NAB HIM!!

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR
HOW'S SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT?
THIS IS MY LAST WARNING.
STEP ASIDE.
I MEAN IT! I'LL SHOOT!

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR
HOW'S SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT?



WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
THIS DECIDES EVERY-THING NOW.
IS THAT ALL YOU CAN DO IN THE END?
THE WEAK SHOULD DIE!
HOW PATHETIC.

...DO YOU THINK THAT MAKES YOU STRONG?
WELL, YOU'RE WRONG.
IT JUST SHOWS HOW WEAK YOU ARE.
THAT'S WHY YOU RESORT TO VIOLENCE SO QUICKLY.
THOSE WHO ARE TRULY STRONG DON'T RELY ON AGGRESSION.

THE WAY YOU PANIC AND LASH OUT PROVES WHAT A WEAKLING YOU ARE!
...ALL VERY ADMI-RABLE.
BUT WHAT CAN YOU PROTECT IF YOU DON'T HAVE POWER?
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.
YOU'RE SCARED OF BEING HURT...
...SO YOU TRY TO HURT OTHERS FIRST.
AND YOU'RE SCARED OF BEING BROKEN ...
...SO YOU TRY TO SMASH EVERY-THING ELSE.

YOU'RE JUST A COWARD.
WORRY. DESPAIR. PRESSURE.
YOU'RE AFRAID YOU'LL BE CRUSHED BY IT ALL.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO STAND YOUR GROUND AND DEAL WITH IT!
I SHOULD BE THE ONE ASKING ...
...WHAT YOU CAN POSSIBLY PROTECT THAT WAY!?
SHUT UP!!

BYU
(WHOOSH)
TAN
(JUMP)
TA
(TAP)

THE WAY YOU'RE ACTING RIGHT NOW...
...REMINDS ME OF SOME PATHETIC KID...
...WHO'D RATHER BURN DOWN THE SCHOOL TO AVOID TAKING A TEST OR KILL HIMSELF WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO IDENTIFY THE REAL PROBLEM HERE OR WHAT YOU REALLY WANT.
YOU ONLY SEEK REFUGE IN YOUR VIOLENCE.
HOW'S THAT GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING?
WHAT WILL YOU GAIN FROM IT?
IT DOESN'T AMOUNT TO ANYTHING!
BUT STILL YOU'LL INSIST THAT YOU'RE RIGHT!?
YOU'VE GOT NO MUSCLE! DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT WHAT'S RIGHT!
GA (YANK)

BYU
(WHOOSH)
GA
(WHACK)
GUN...
(SWING)
SA
(DODGE)
ZA
(SLIDE)

YOU HAVE A LOT OF NERVE, STANDING UP TO ME LIKE THAT.
...SEE? YOU'RE THE WEAK ONE.
...WHAT RIGHT DOES AN OUTSIDER LIKE YOU HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING?
HOW COULD YOU KNOW OF THE DESPAIR WE'VE HAD TO STOMACH!?
HOW COULD YOU UNDERSTAND THE EVER-PRESENT FEAR OF DEATH THE BLADE CHILDREN MUST FACE?

HAVEN'T YOU EVEN CONSIDERED HOW MUCH I'VE SUFFERED ...
...BEFORE COMING TO THIS DECISION!!?
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
MUKU (RISE)
I DON'T KNOW.
PAN (PAT)
...BUT...
...I KNOW THIS FOR A FACT.

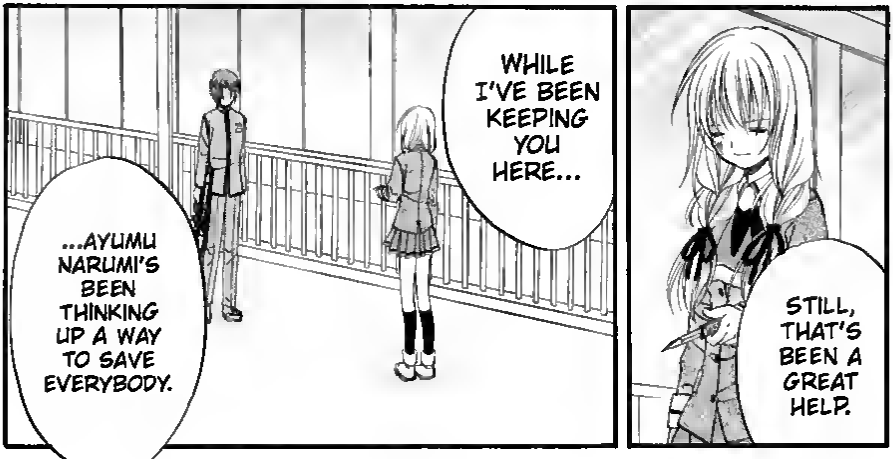
GOSHI (WIPE)
YOU DIDN'T ONCE OBJECT TO WHAT I WAS SAYING.
AND YOU COULDN'T JUST IGNORE MY WORDS EITHER.
IN THE END, YOU TRIED TO SHUT ME UP BY FORCE.
IF YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE SO RIGHT...
...THEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE PAID ANY ATTENTION TO ME...
...AND WOULD HAVE HEADED STRAIGHT UP TO THE FIFTH FLOOR.
BUT YOU DIDN'T.
...IN FACT...YOU COULDN'T.
MY WORDS BROUGHT THE DOUBTS YOU KEEP HIDDEN IN THE DEPTHS OF YOUR HEART TO THE SURFACE.
THEY FRIGHTENED YOU.
AND YOU COULDN'T HANDLE THAT UNCERTAINTY AS IT REARED ITS HEAD AND SUGGESTED YOU MIGHT BE WRONG.
SU (SWISH)

IN SPITE OF ALL THAT, YOU STILL...
...CALL YOURSELF STRONG!?
YOU HAD TO DROWN THAT OUT...
...SO YOU TRIED TO FORCE ME TO BE QUIET.
.....

...DO YOU THINK ...
...SHE'S OKAY OUT THERE?
KANON HASN'T COME YET.
MAYBE THAT MEANS SHE MANAGED TO STALL HIM.
DON'T LET YOURSELF GET DISTRACTED NOW.
WORRYING ABOUT THAT IDIOT WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
HEY!
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK ABOUT HER!
SHE'S RISKING HER LIFE TO HOLD KANON BACK FOR US!!

TRUST ME, I KNOW.
I CAN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TAKE...
THAT WON'T BE AN EASY TASK, EVEN FOR HER!
.....!
BUT IF WE WASTE OUR TIME WORRYING ...
...WE'LL PUT ALL HER HARD WORK TO WASTE.
...RIGHT NOW WE HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON HOW TO BEAT KANON HILBERT.

...YOU MAY BE STRONG.
THAT'S THE ONLY THING...
...WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON.
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'RE WEAK.


...AYUMU NARUMI'S BEEN THINKING UP A WAY TO SAVE EVERYBODY.
WHILE I'VE BEEN KEEPING YOU HERE...
STILL, THAT'S BEEN A GREAT HELP.

GU (CLENCH)
...BUT...
...UNTIL HE ACTUALLY PUTS HIS PLAN INTO ACTION, MY HANDS ARE TIED.
HE REALLY DOESN'T MAKE THINGS EASY, NOW DOES HE?
...YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
EVEN IF AYUMU-KUN MAKES A MOVE...
...HE'S NOT GOING TO SAVE ANYBODY.
FATE HAS PLANNED IT SUCH THAT HIS VERY EXISTENCE IS CANCELED OUT.

EVEN IF HE WERE A GOD...
...HE CAN'T SAVE THE BLADE CHILDREN ...!
...WHY CAN'T YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL THE END TO FIND OUT?
YOU WON'T REALLY KNOW UNTIL THEN.
NOT UNTIL THE FINAL CURTAIN FALLS CAN YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN.
SO NO MATTER HOW MAD IT MAKES YOU...
...OR HOW MUCH IT HURTS ...
...YOU JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE!

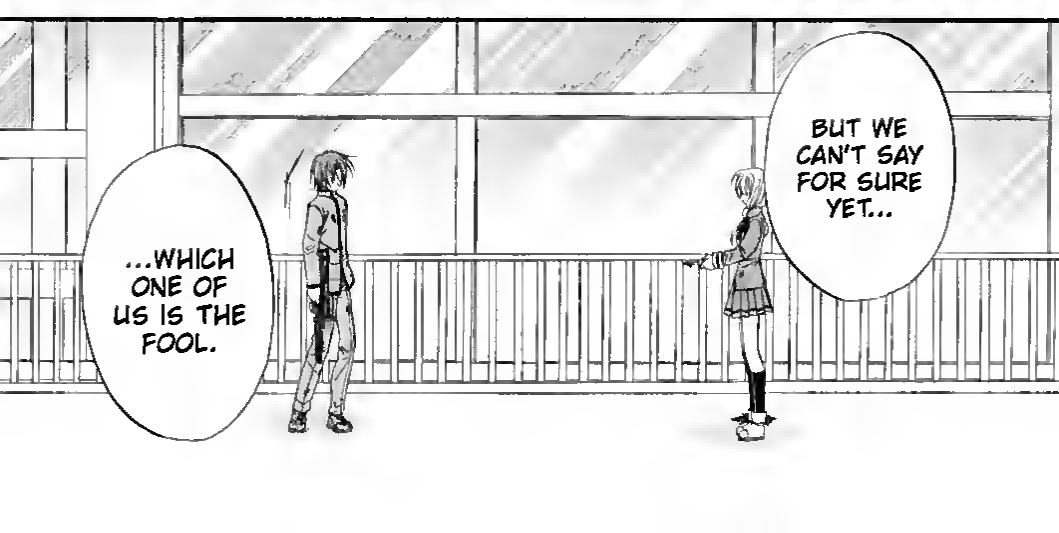
IF ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR ME TO FIND ARE DESPAIR AND FEAR...
...WHAT'S THE POINT IN WAITING ...!?
YOU WANT ME TO WAIT ...?
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TERRIFYING IT IS TO FEEL DEATH AND DESPAIR CLOSING IN ON YOU!!

SU (LIFT)
...WELL, IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH...
...TO GET AN IDEA.
SHE...
...SHE WOULDN'T ...!!

ZAKU
(SLICE)
ZU
(SWISH)
BOTA
(SPLASH)
SU
(RAISE)

I'VE SLICED MY ARM PRETTY DEEPLY.
I THINK I MIGHT HAVE HIT A MAJOR ARTERY.
THAT MEANS HEAVY BLOOD LOSS.
IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING TO STOP IT, I'LL PROBABLY PASS OUT IN LESS THAN TEN MINUTES.
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I COULD EVEN DIE FROM IT.
UNTIL NARUMI-SAN MAKES HIS MOVE...
...I'M GOING TO STAY LIKE THIS.
I'LL STAND, AWAITING MY APPROACHING DEATH...
...AND SHOW YOU I CAN SMILE TO THE VERY END.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN HE'LL ACT...
...OR EVEN IF HE WILL ACT FOR THAT MATTER!!
ARE YOU CRAZY!?
FEEL FREE TO LAUGH AT ME FOR BEING A FOOLISH GIRL.
THEN AT THAT POINT, I'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE IN TO DESPAIR.


...WHICH ONE OF US IS THE FOOL.
BUT WE CAN'T SAY FOR SURE YET...

This is my bet...
...and I'm going to stand by it to the very end.

...I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I CAN...
...NARUMI-SAN...
THE REST IS UP TO YOU...
I'M COUNTING ON YOU!

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

...WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GAIN BY DOING THAT TO YOURSELF ...?
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT'LL ACCOM-PLISH!?
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
.....
LOVE DOESN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING IN RETURN.

I WANT TO SEE THAT ONE DAZZLING MOMENT!!
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
I JUST WANT TO SEE...
...SOMEONE WHO'S HAD EVERYTHING STOLEN FROM THEM BY GOD...
...TAKE EVERYTHING BACK AGAIN WITH HIS OWN STRENGTH.

16:53
SHIT...
TIME'S SLIPPING THROUGH OUR FINGERS, AND WE'RE NOT GETTING ANYWHERE!
I HAVEN'T GOTTEN ONE LEAD ON HOW TO ATTACK HIM.
.....
IS THIS ALL MY MIND HAS TO OFFER?
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?
...STAYING QUIET WON'T GET US ANYWHERE.
WE'LL LEAVE THE QUESTION OF HIS INHIBITIONS FOR LATER.
FIRST, LET'S THINK UP A BASIC STRATEGY.

WE KNOW WE HAVE TO SHOOT HIM WITH AN ANESTHETIC BULLET.
SO WHICH APPROACH WOULD GIVE US THE HIGHEST CHANCE OF PULLING IT OFF?
IF WE CAN JUST NAIL THAT, THE REST OF THE PLAN WILL COME EASILY.
...BUT WE NEED SOMEONE WHO'S A GOOD ENOUGH SHOT.
JUST TRAINING A GUN ON HIM'S TOUGH AS IT IS.
HE'S RIGHT.
ONCE WE'RE IN RANGE OF KANON'S PISTOL, WE WON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO AIM BEFORE HE SHOOTS.
THEN WHAT IF WE FIRED FROM OUTSIDE OF HIS RANGE?
THE ANESTHETIC WEAPONS WE HAVE ARE REMODELED AIR GUNS...
THAT WON'T DO ANY GOOD, EITHER.
WITH HIS PISTOL, KANON-KUN CAN SHOOT FROM A MUCH GREATER DISTANCE, NOT TO MENTION MORE ACCURATELY.

IN FACT, THAT COULD BE EVEN MORE DANGEROUS WITH KANON.
WELL THEN...
...OUR ONLY CHOICES ARE CATCHING HIM OFF GUARD OR MAKING A SNEAK ATTACK.
WE'LL USE THAT AS THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR PLAN OF ATTACK—
SORRY, BUT THAT WON'T WORK.
.....?
...KANON'S TRAINED IN BATTLE SINCE HE WAS A KID.
HE'S A VETERAN AT FIGHTING.

EVEN IF HE'S NOT CONSCIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT IT...
...HE CAN STILL FIGHT ON HIS REFLEXES ALONE.
IT'S INGRAINED IN HIS INSTINCTS.
IN OTHER WORDS, IF HE SENSED EVEN THE SLIGHTEST THREAT OF AN ATTACK...
...HIS BODY WOULD ACT ON ITS OWN TO STRIKE FIRST.
HIS BODY'S COMPLETELY CONDITIONED TO IT.
THAT MEANS...

...EVEN IF HE'S ASLEEP ...
...OR TARGETED FROM BEHIND...
...KANON-KUN'S BODY WILL RETURN FIRE INSTINC-TIVELY.
AND SINCE IT'S AN INVOLUNTARY REACTION...
IT'S WHAT YOU'D CALL "BATTLE REFLEXES."
...IT'S PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL.
AND YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS...
...EVEN IF HE'S WEAK AND HURT, KANON'S BODY WILL ACT ON ITS OWN IN SELF-DEFENSE.
BEING REFLEXES, THEIR INHERENT LACK OF CONTROL AND MODERATION MEANS THAT...
...IF WE TRIED TO CORNER KANON AND WERE SLOPPY ABOUT IT, WHEN WE WERE HIT, WE'D BE HIT HARD.

LIKE I SAID BEFORE.
KANON FEARS THE POTENTIAL HE HAS TO BECOME AN UNPARALLELED KILLING MACHINE.
SO NORMALLY HE CONSCIOUSLY HOLDS HIMSELF BACK.
BINGO ...
SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES ...
...KANON FIGHTS WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF RESTRAINT?
BUT HE'S ALREADY SO STRONG, YOU CAN'T TELL.
I'VE IGNORED CHANCES TO ATTACK HIM OFF GUARD.
IN THIS BATTLE I'VE DONE MY BEST NOT TO AWAKEN KANON-KUN'S INSTINCTIVE ATTACK RESPONSE.
EVEN WHEN HE'S INJURED, I'D RATHER WAIT FOR HIS RECOVERY BEFORE ATTACKING.
STILL ...
...THAT'S BETTER THAN WE COULD ASK FOR.

NO MATTER HOW WELL WE CALCULATE A SURPRISE ATTACK...
...WE'RE NO MATCH FOR THE SPEED AND ACCURACY OF KANON-KUN'S BATTLE REFLEXES.
...THEN WHAT OTHER OPTIONS DO WE HAVE?
THE MOMENT WE'D MOVE IN FOR AN ATTACK...
...WE'D BE AS GOOD AS DEAD.
BUT EVEN IF WE DID LAND A SHOT...
...THOSE WHO LAUNCHED THE ATTACK FIRST ON OUR SIDE WOULD BE SACRIFICING THEMSELVES.
IF WE CAN'T HOPE TO NAIL HIM WITH AN ANESTHETIC BULLET VIA A SNEAK ATTACK, THEN...
THAT'S RIGHT...
...OUR ONLY OTHER OPTION IS TO ATTACK IN WAVES WITHOUT GIVING HIM THE CHANCE TO DODGE THE NEXT BARRAGE...
THAT'S OUR ONLY BET.

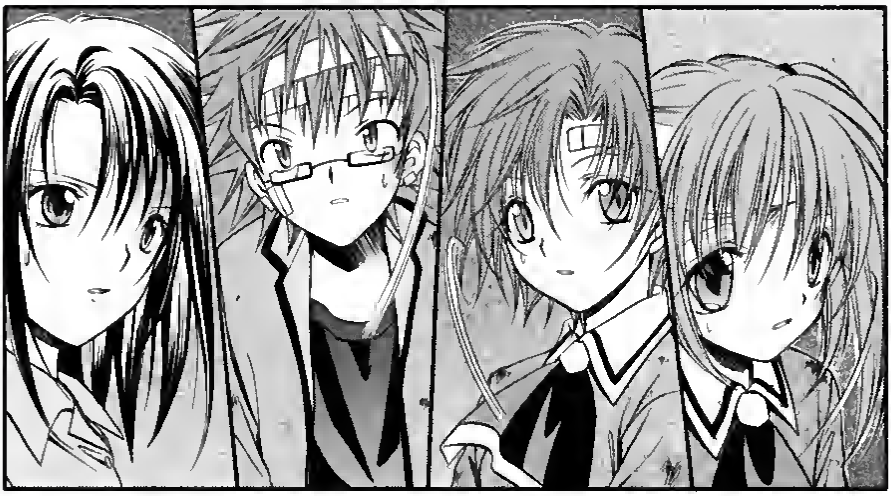
IF WE WERE DEALING WITH THE KANON-KUN THAT WAS STILL HOLDING BACK A LITTLE, WE'D HAVE A CHANCE OF SUCCESS.
YOU SAW, DIDN'T YOU, NARUMI JUNIOR?
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW WE CAN EVEN FACE KANON-KUN AS HE IS NOW...
"AS HE IS NOW"?
YOU SAW HOW HE MOVED WHEN HE TOOK US OUT BEFORE.
YEAH, I DID ...
IT WAS ALMOST INHUMAN.
MY EYES COULD BARELY KEEP UP.
THAT'S KANON WHEN HE MEANS BUSINESS.

KANON'S NOT EVEN TRYING TO HOLD HIMSELF BACK ANYMORE.
HIS BODY'S TAKEN COMMAND ...
...AND ITS FIGHTING WITH ITS REFLEXES ON MAX.
...HE'S ALMOST COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL OF HIMSELF.
EVEN IF HE HAS HESITATIONS SOMEWHERE DEEP DOWN...
...IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW.
...HE'S NOT LEAVING ANY OPENINGS.
THIS IS THE RAW POWER THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT WHEN THEY CALL KANON-KUN "THE GUN WITH WINGS."

EVEN WITH THE TINIEST CHINK OR HESITATION IN HIS HEART...
...NO AMOUNT OF WEAK REASONING IS ENOUGH TO CLIP THOSE INVINCIBLE WINGS OF HIS.
GI (GRIP)
.....
IS THAT REALLY HOW IT HAS TO BE?
IS THERE NO CHANCE OF BEATING HIM?
IS IT NO USE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY...?

USING YOUR HEAD AND THINKING UP A STRATEGY USUALLY WORKS ON ANY ENEMY.
BUT I'VE NEVER COME ACROSS SOMEONE SO SKILLED IN FIGHTING THAT EVEN THE MOST FLAWLESS SURPRISE ATTACK WOULD FAIL...
I GUESS THERE REALLY IS NO HOPE AT TRAPPING HI—
...SHIT. REFLEXES, HUH...?

...HOLD IT.
IF THAT'S ALL TRUE, THEN HOW COME...
...HE TOOK MY SISTER'S FLYING KICK IN THE GUT?

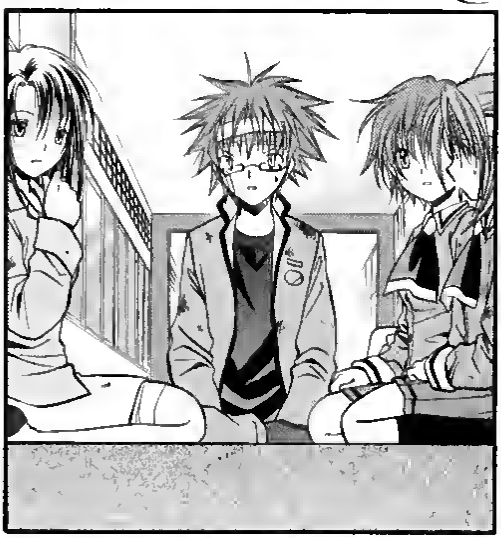


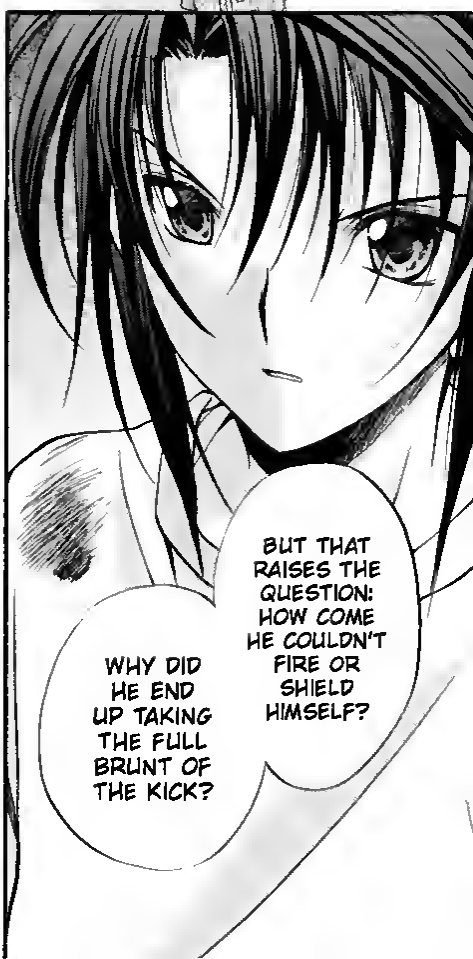
BACK WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO FINISH YOU OFF.
YOU KNOW.

BUT HE REACTED IMMEDIATELY, EVEN TURNING HIS GUN ON HER.
A NORMAL PERSON WOULD'VE TAKEN THE ATTACK SQUARE IN THE CHEST, AND THAT'D BE THAT.
MY SISTER PULLED A PERFECT SURPRISE ATTACK AND LANDED A FLYING KICK ON HIM.

AND HE DID REACT AT LIGHTNING SPEED TO MY SISTER'S ATTACK.

I'D EXPECT A RESPONSE LIKE THAT FROM HIM.
YOU SAID THAT EVEN IF HE WERE ASLEEP, ONCE HE FELT THE ATTACK COMING, HE'D AUTOMATICALLY GO INTO ATTACK MODE.




BUT THAT RAISES THE QUESTION: HOW COME HE COULDN'T FIRE OR SHIELD HIMSELF?
WHY DID HE END UP TAKING THE FULL BRUNT OF THE KICK?

AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT DOESN'T FIT.

OH YEAH ...
YOU'RE RIGHT.
REMEMBER? WHEN I HAD MY GUN AIMED AT HIM.
HE TOOK YOUR BODY SLAM FULL-ON TOO, ASAZUKI.
...YOU'D THINK HIS BODY WOULD HAVE GONE INTO BATTLE MODE AUTOMATICALLY AND DEALT WITH YOU IMMEDIATELY.
BUT EVEN WITH HIS ATTENTION DIVERTED...
IF I HADN'T DISTRACTED HIM, HE WOULDN'T HAVE MESSED UP AND LET YOU HURL YOURSELF AT HIM LIKE THAT.
...BUT. IN BOTH INSTANCES HE WAS SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT.
I COULD UNDERSTAND IF HE WAS HOLDING BACK LIKE HE USUALLY DOES.
IT'S LIKELY THAT IT TAKES PART OF HIS ATTENTION TO HAVE TO CONTROL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES...
AM I WRONG?
N-NO.
KANON-KUN COUNTER-ATTACKS REFLEXIVELY ...

YOU'RE RIGHT...
AFTER ALL, HE WAS ABLE TO REACT TO YOUR SISTER'S ATTACK FROM BEHIND.
AND WHEN I TRIED TO GET IN HIS WAY, THE MOMENT IT HAPPENED ...
...YOU'D THINK HE'D HAVE AUTOMATICALLY TRIED TO SHOOT ME.
NOT TO MENTION THAT AT THAT POINT IN THE BATTLE, HE WASN'T EVEN TRYING TO HOLD BACK HIS STRENGTH.
IN FACT, HE WAS FIGHTING WITH HIS REFLEXES ON FULL POWER.
...WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?
SO HOW DID ANY OF THIS HAPPEN ...?
EVEN THOUGH HE'S STRONG ENOUGH AS IT IS AT HALF-CAPACITY...
...HE CAN FIGHT ON HIS REFLEXES ALONE AND UTILIZE HIS FULL POWER.

WAIT, THAT'S IT...
THAT'S WHAT IT IS!!
IS IT A SIMPLE MATTER OF CARELESSNESS?
AN INEVITABLE ANOMALY?
NO... TWICE ISN'T AN ANOMALY.
I CAN'T FORGET ABOUT HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL CHINK.
HE WON'T KILL ANYBODY BUT BLADE CHILDREN.
HE'S DEDICATED TO THAT RULE...

IT'S HIS CONSCIOUS AND HIS SUBCONSCIOUS!
THEY'RE GIVING HIM TWO DIFFERENT ORDERS!
IT'S HIS BATTLE REFLEXES THAT ARE THE KEY TO OUR ATTACK!!

HOLD IT...
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, AYUMU!?
HE'S RIGHT!
KANON-KUN'S CONSCIOUSLY TRYING TO STOP HIS REFLEXES!
WHAT'S THAT MEAN?
RIO!
THINK ABOUT IT.
KANON-KUN'S BODY'S BEEN TRAINED TO AUTOMATICALLY KILL AN ENEMY ONCE HE FEELS AN ATTACK COMING!
IN OTHER WORDS, RELYING ON HIS BATTLE REFLEXES ALONE ...
...HE'S CAPABLE OF KILLING SOMEONE WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT!
WE KNOW THAT!
THAT'S WHY WE SAID HE'S GOT NO OPENINGS LEFT TO ATTACK—
HOWEVER ...

...WAS SOMEONE HE FORBADE HIMSELF FROM KILLING?
...WHAT IF THE PERSON WHO REACTED TO HIS BATTLE REFLEXES...
AND WHAT IF HE ONLY REALIZED IT AFTER HIS BODY HAS ALREADY REACTED?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED WHEN MY SISTER ATTACKED.

BASICALLY, HE WAS TRYING TO COMMAND HIS BODY CONSCIOUSLY WHEN IT'D ALREADY MOVED OF ITS OWN SUBCONSCIOUS WILL.
HE SWITCHED INTO ATTACK MODE REFLEXIVELY, BUT PANICKED AND TRIED TO CANCEL IT.
NOW I'LL ASK YOU THIS: WHEN YOUR BODY REACTS INSTINCTIVELY ...
...CAN YOU CONSCIOUSLY FORCE YOURSELF TO STOP INSTANTLY?
BOTH HIS CONSCIOUS AND HIS SUBCONSCIOUS WERE THROWING ORDERS AT HIS BODY.
AND BOTH TIMES THE CONFLICTING ORDERS WERE GIVEN ONE RIGHT AFTER THE OTHER.
GO AND STOP.
IT'S MUCH LIKE A BODY WITH TWO HEADS WHERE EACH IS TRYING TO ASSUME CONTROL WITHOUT CONSULTING THE OTHER FIRST.

IMAGINE SUDDENLY BEING SHOVED FROM BEHIND WHILE STANDING AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF.
YOU'D PANIC AS YOU TRIED TO REGAIN YOUR BALANCE.
BUT IT WOULD BE NO EASY TASK TO FIND YOUR FOOTING IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT.
...EVEN IF YOU DID MANAGE TO DO IT, IT'D TAKE YOUR FULL ATTENTION.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD COPE WITH ANYTHING ELSE THAT CAME AT YOU...
...EVEN IF IT MEANT TAKING A HIT...!
THAT'S WHY HE TOOK MY SISTER'S FLYING KICK SQUARE IN THE GUT.
SAME AS WITH ASAZUKI'S ATTACK.
I GET IT NOW ...
WHEN HE TRIED TO SHOOT ME INSTINC-TIVELY...
...YOUR SHOUT HELD HIM BACK!

HE'D MADE UP HIS MIND THAT IF I GOT FREE, HE'D GIVE UP.
AND THERE WAS THE TRACE OF UNWILLINGNESS TO KILL HIS OWN TEAMMATES.
SO HIS CONSCIOUS TRIED TO STOP HIS BODY FROM FIRING AUTOMATICALLY.
HIS SUBCONSCIOUS AND CONSCIOUS WERE LIKE THE ACCELERATOR AND THE BRAKE PEDALS—THEY COULDN'T BOTH WORK AT THE SAME TIME.
IT'S SO SIMPLE.
NO MATTER HOW INGRAINED HIS BATTLE REFLEXES MAY BE...
...IF HE'S FOCUSED ENTIRELY ON STOPPING HIS REFLEXES ONCE THEY'VE BEEN SWITCHED TO FULL POWER, THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN REACT TO A NEW ATTACK.
IF HIS CONSCIOUS IS ALREADY DEVOTED TO STOPPING HIS AUTOMATIC REFLEXES ...
...HIS MIND CAN'T FOCUS ON ANYTHING ELSE.
SO IT'S AT THAT KEY MOMENT ...

...THAT EVEN OUR POWERLESS GROUP...
...CAN EASILY NAIL HIM WITH THE ANES-THETICS.

GU (CLENCH)
WE NEED TO DRAW UP A TIGHT PLAN OF ATTACK...
GYU! (SQUEEZE)
...THAT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR US TO WIN.
BUT STILL ...
A FLAWLESSLY TIMED ASSAULT TO NAB HIM AND END THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL!

...HE REALLY IS SOMETHING.
IT'S NOT EASY TO TRY TO STOP YOURSELF FROM REACTING WHEN IT'S SO THOROUGHLY INGRAINED.
THAT MUST BE WHY HE LEAVES HIMSELF OPEN TO ATTACK MOMENTARILY.
...BUT I HAVE TO SAY...
IT MAY NOT BE MUCH, BUT KANON'S SUBCONSCIOUS HARBORS SOME DOUBT.
THAT SEED OF DOUBT MIGHT BE JUST ENOUGH TO DULL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES SOMEWHAT.
NOT TO MENTION THAT KANON KNOWS...
...BETTER THAN ANYBODY ELSE...
...THE WEIGHT THAT MURDER LEAVES ON YOUR MIND AND HOW LONG IT TAKES TO RECOVER FROM IT...

...SO YOU MEAN HIS CONSCIENCE ...
THAT'S WHY MORE THAN ANYBODY, HE FEARS...
...MAKING A MISTAKE AND KILLING SOMEONE.
...IS OUR HOPE...

ISN'T THAT WHY KANON ALWAYS SUPPRESSES HIS POWER!?
H—
HOLD IT...
HE DOES!
TO AVOID ACCIDENTALLY KILLING SOMEBODY...
...KANON ALWAYS PAYS CLOSE ATTENTION TO KEEPING HIS REFLEXES IN CHECK!
YOU'RE RIGHT ...!
HIS CONSCIOUS MIND IS ALREADY WORKING TO HOLD HIM BACK!
SHIT...

AND THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE ...
...THAT HE'S WELL AWARE THAT HIS WEAKNESS LIES THEREIN ...!
KOKU (NOD)
WAIT. ARE YOU SUGGESTING ...
...THAT HE'S GOTTEN USED TO FIGHTING WHILE STRUGGLING TO CONTROL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES?
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE ONLY TIME KANON REALLY GOT SERIOUS IN THE FIGHT...
...WAS WHEN HE'D BEEN DRIVEN HARD INTO A CORNER.
SINCE HE DOESN'T NEED HIS FULL POWER FOR THE FIGHT, HE'S ABLE TO CONTROL HIS REFLEXES IN A SURPRISE ATTACK WITHOUT THROWING HIMSELF INTO A PANIC.
WITH HIS INCREDIBLE BATTLE REFLEXES AND WIT TO BOOT, THERE'S NOT EVEN A NEED FOR HIM TO GO FULL THROTTLE.

WE'VE FOUGHT WITH KANON BEFORE, BUT...
...EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE TIMES WHEN STEALTH ATTACKS CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE, I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM TAKE ONE SQUARELY LIKE THAT.
HE MANAGED TO CONTROL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES PERFECTLY.
HE OFFSET ANY ROOM FOR PANIC OR DESPE-RATION...
...AND LEFT HIMSELF WIDE OPEN HEED-LESSLY!
SO IN THE FLUSTER TO CONTROL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES ...
...HE LEFT AN OPENING FOR ATTACKERS THAT HE NEVER USUALLY WOULD!
THIS IS BAD...
KANON'S SHARP.
ONCE NARUMI JUNIOR SETS SOMETHING UP, HE'LL REALIZE WHAT WE'RE DOING.

WHAT DO WE DO!?
IF KANON RETURNS MORE FOCUSED AND AWARE...
...WE WON'T STAND A CHANCE!
THERE'S NO NEED FOR HIM TO RUSH.
THIS IS HIS TIME TO COOL OFF BEFORE HE COMES AT US AGAIN...
WHEN HE COMES, IT'LL BE WITH MORE ATTENTION THAN EVER BEFORE.
THEN WHY DON'T WE...
...TAKE AWAY ANY ROOM FOR HIM TO DO THAT?

HUH ...?
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE HAVE TO CORNER HIM SO THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO CONTROL HIS BATTLE REFLEXES.
... WHA ...?
CORNERING KANON...
...IS IMPOSSIBLE, DON'T YOU REALIZE!?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY.

NO MATTER WHAT WE TRY, HIS COMBAT SKILLS ARE TOO—
EVEN IF WE DON'T HAVE THE COMBAT SKILLS TO MATCH KANON'S, WE STILL HAVE A WAY.
THE LITTLE BROTHER'S DECIDED HE HAS WHAT IT TAKES.
... RIGHT ...?
LITTLE... BROTHER ...?

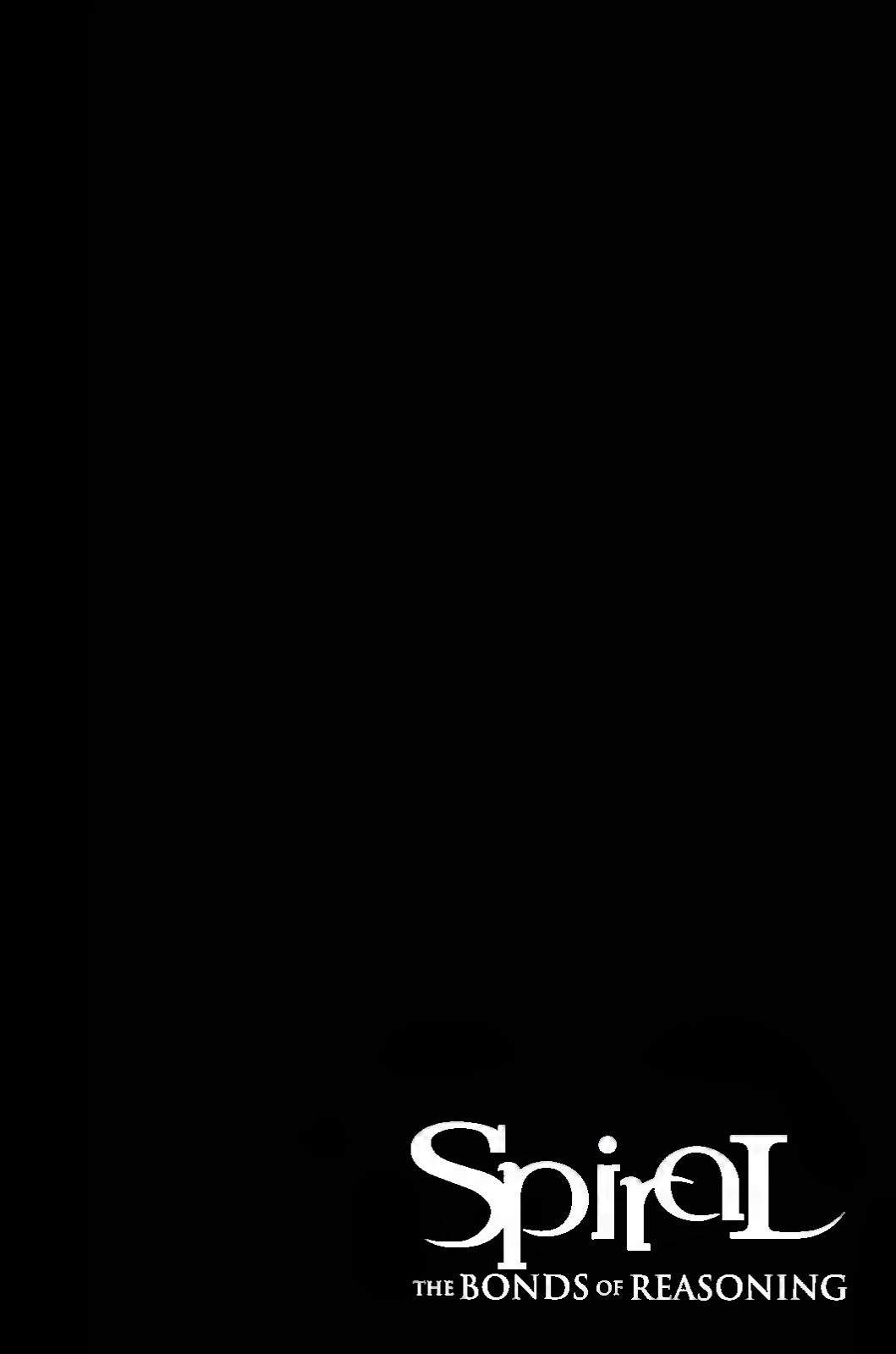
You said it.
FU CHEW
NOT LIKE WE CAN GET OUT OF THIS ONE.
WE JUST HAVE TO BRACE OURSELVES FOR THE WORST.
NOW WE HAVE TO MAKE IT A REALITY.
...WE'VE FIGURED OUT A WAY WE CAN WIN.

...WE'LL BRING HIM DOWN.
THE INVINCIBLE GUN WITH WINGS...
...KANON HILBERT!

NEXT SPIRAL
PREVIEW
THIS IS MY PLAN.
IN THE NEXT VOLUME, THE KANON ARC REACHES ITS FINALE!!
AYUMU'S FINGERS PLAY FRANZ LISZT'S COMPOSITION, "THE BLESSING OF GOD IN SOLITUDE"!! THE CURTAIN FINALLY FALLS ON THE TRAGIC STAGE THAT HAS TURNED TSUKIOMI HIGH INTO A BATTLEFIELD!!
"THE BLESSING OF GOD IN SOLITUDE"!?
A...
...PIANO...?

THAT'S A PRETTY GRIM LOOK YOU'VE GOT ON.
YES ...
I PUT MYSELF HERE ON PURPOSE.
DESPITE ALL THAT, I'M STILL GOING IN.
IS WHAT WAITS AT THE END OF THIS PRE-ORDAINED FIGHT A FINALE OF DESPAIR OR AN OVERTURE OF HOPE!?
I'M AFRAID THAT MAN...
...MIGHT EVEN BE PLOTTING AGAINST US!
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 10 OF "SPIRAL: THE BONDS OF REASONING"!

To be continued. Please wait !


Spiral
THE BONDS OF REASONING

BONUS STORY
GREAT DETECTIVE KIYOTAKA NARUMI: KURUMI KOHINATA'S CHALLENGE

SPIRAL SIDE-STORY HEROINE

KURUMI KOHINATA THOROUGH ANALYSIS

PROFILE: KURUMI KOHINATA

THE SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD GRANDDAUGHTER OF MONJUUROU KOHINATA, PRESIDENT OF THE GLOBALLY-INFLUENTIAL KOHINATA GROUP. ON HER GRANDFATHER'S WHIM, SHE WAS PRESSED INTO A MARRIAGE WITH KIYOTAKA NARUMI, CALLED THE "GREAT DETECTIVE" AT THE METROPOLITAN POLICE HQ. NOW, VYING FOR CONTROL OF THE COMPANY AND THE FREEDOM TO LOVE WHO SHE PLEASES, SHE'S COMPETING WITH KIYOTAKA NARUMI AT SOLVING CRIMES, BUT THE MATCH IS STILL WITHOUT A VICTOR.

Side-story novel is now online!! (Japanese Only)

http://gangan.square-enix.co.jp/spiral/

RELATIONSHIP WEB OF SPIRAL SIDE-STORY CHARACTERS

MADOKA HANEOKA
METROPOLITAN POLICE HQ'S CHIEF INVESTIGATOR LATER, MARRIES KIYOTAKA AND CHANGES HER LAST NAME TO "NARUMI."

KURUMI KOHINATA

BOSS AND SUBORDINATE

ENGAGED!?

KIYOTAKA NARUMI
CALLED THE "GREAT DETECTIVE" AT HQ, HE'S ENTRUSTED WITH SOLVING THE MORE DIFFICULT CASES.

BROTHERS

AYUMU NARUMI

WHEN DOES THE SPIRAL SIDE-STORY NOVEL TAKE PLACE?

SPIRAL: THE BONDS OF REASONING
THE ARC THAT STARTS TWO YEARS AFTER KIYOTAKA NARUMI'S DISAPPEARANCE.

KIYOTAKA NARUMI DISAPPEARS

PAST — FUTURE

SIDE STORY: GREAT DETECTIVE KIYOTAKA NARUMI: KURUMI KOHINATA'S CHALLENGE
THE STORY BEFORE KIYOTAKA DISAPPEARED LEAVING ONLY THE WORDS "I'M GOING TO FOLLOW THE BLADE CHILDREN."

"SPIRAL: THE BONDS OF REASONING" NOVEL
SIDE STORY TO THE SPIRAL MAIN ARC. THE HEROINE ONLY SHOWS UP IN THE NOVEL.

THERE'S A MAN AT THE POLICE STATION
THEY CALL THE "GREAT DETECTIVE."

ALMOST LIKE GOD HIMSELF...

OH, HI THERE.
I'M KURUMI KOHINATA.
A LOT'S HAPPENED, BUT LET ME CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE. I'M A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS TO WHOM FATE HAS DEALT A GREAT MISFORTUNE. I'VE BEEN FORCED INTO A BATTLE OF WITS WITH A POLICE INSPECTOR NAMED KIYOTAKA NARUMI.
ANYWAY, I'VE BEEN COMPETING WITH NARUMI FOR A WHILE NOW, BUT I'VE HAD NOTHING BUT A STRING OF FAILURES.
TODAY I'VE COME TO POLICE HQ TO FACE NARUMI AGAIN, BUT...
ZUN
ZUN (STRIDE)

DON (BAM)
.....
CHA (SALUTE)
チャッ
...H-H-H-H-HA-HAN—
...HANEOKA-SAN!!
SIGN. FIRST INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
捜査一課

I-I-I JUST SAW A SUSPICIOUS BLOOD-SPATTERED RABBIT CARRYING A CHINESE BROADSWORD DOWN THE HALL!!
OH YEAH.
THAT'S THE INSPECTOR.
IN-INSPEC-TOR?
YOU MEAN NARUMI?
THERE'S THIS SUPERHERO TV SHOW THAT'S ALL THE RAGE WITH THE KIDS CALLED "LONE BUNNY'S BLOOD-DRENCHED TRIAL: THE WAKAYAMA WESTERN ARC." YESTERDAY, THE MASCOTS DRESSED UP AND PUT ON A LIVE SHOW.
THEY HELD IT ON THE ROOF OF THE DEPARTMENT STORE
KI (SQUEAK)
THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN AWFULLY BIZARRE PROGRAM...
"WAKAYAMA WESTERN"?

I HEARD THEY'RE MAKING A MUSICAL OUT OF IT TOO.
...WHO DEALS WITH BIOENGINEERED MONSTERS THAT CAN'T BE TRIED BY THE LEGAL SYSTEM USING HIS CHINESE BROADSWORD. A REAL THRILLER-ACTION SHOW, AS IT WERE.
IN THE STORY, THE BUNNY'S A LONE JUDICIAL OFFICER...
LOOK, THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT.
THAT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT FOR A KIDS' SHOW... DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT AT ALL...
A LONE JUDICIAL OFFICER...
THAT OUTFIT YOU SAW IS EVIDENCE.
THEN THAT BLOOD WAS REAL...
RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOW, THE MAN PLAYING THE BUNNY WAS SHOT RIGHT THROUGH HIS COSTUME.
THE CASE IS CURRENTLY UNDER INVESTIGATION.
...WHY'S NARUMI PARADING AROUND IN SUCH AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF EVIDENCE?
WAIT, SO...

EVEN THOUGH THE INSPECTOR ISN'T IN CHARGE OF THE CASE, HE DECIDED TO HAVE SOME FUN AND TRY IT ON.
AND THAT'S WHEN—
HE REALIZED HE WAS STUCK?
KOKURI (NOD) コクリ
I HAD HIM CONFINED TO THE SOFA UNTIL...
...HE SAID HE HAD TO USE THE BATHROOM.
THEN SHOULDN'T HE STAY PUT UNTIL HE FIGURES OUT HOW TO TAKE IT OFF?
I JUST KNOW LETTING HIM WALK AROUND LIKE THAT'S GOING TO LEAD TO TROUBLE.
BUT IF HE CAN'T GET OUT OF THE COSTUME, HOW'S HE SUPPOSED TO USE THE JOHN?
AND I CAN'T IMAGINE THERE WAS ANY NEED TO BRING THAT SWORD WITH HIM TOO.

BATA (STOMP)
BATA
BATA
A LITTLE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE, HM?
GATA (CLATTER)
SHIT!!
I LET HIM GET AWAY!!
HEY, HANE-OKA!
BAN (BANG)
THERE'S SOMETHING STRUTTING AROUND THE BUILDING CARRYING A SWORD THAT'S ACTING AN AWFUL LOT LIKE THAT BASTARD NARUMI!!
D—
...DID HE DO SOME-THING!?

NO, HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
BUT JUST SEEING HIM SWING THAT THING AROUND IS PLENTY REASON TO PANIC.
IT'S...
IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
SHUT IT!
UGH...
YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF GUARDING HIM!
FINE! THAT DOES IT!
THEN I THINK IT'S TIME TO CATCH HIM!
DOSU (STOMP)
HE'S MINE!
DOSU
SU SU (SCOOT) SU ススス...
!
INSPEC-TOR!

ULTRAMAN LIGHTNING KICK!
DOGO (WHACK)
NO LAST GOOD-BYES, I TAKE IT!?
IN THAT CASE, SAY YOUR PRAYERS!
てんっ
TEN (BOUNCE)
KORO (ROLL)
KORO
HYO! (LIFT)
ひょい
.....
HOW COME I CAN'T WIN AGAINST SOME GOON WHO GETS OFF WEARING SOMETHING SO RIDICULOUS AROUND THE STATION!?

THERE'S A MAN AT THE POLICE STATION THEY CALL THE "GREAT DETECTIVE."
THE NEXT DAY
KATA (CLINK)
HANEOKA-SAN?
ZU (SIP)
ABOUT THAT BUNNY MURDER CASE...
...I HEARD IT WAS SUDDENLY CLOSED.
YES, WELL ...
YESTERDAY, WHEN THE INSPECTOR CAUSED THAT BUNNY-SUIT SCENE...
...SOMEBODY WHO'D BEEN CALLED IN AS A WITNESS FOR THE CASE HAPPENED TO BE PRESENT.
HE GOT SCARED OUT OF HIS WITS WHEN HE SAW THE BUNNY RUNNING AROUND HQ.
OOOOH, SO THAT WAS THE MURDERER?
EXACTLY.

DID NARUMI PREDICT THAT WOULD HAPPEN?
WHEN I ASKED, HE JUST WINKED AND SAID, "YOU THINK I CAN PREDICT EVERY-THING?"
HE WAS SO PARANOID AND JUMPY, HE THOUGHT THE BUNNY WAS COMING TO PUT HIM ON TRIAL.
WHAT A WIMP, RIGHT?
HE WAS SO FREAKED OUT, HE ENDED UP TURNING HIMSELF IN. REALLY FUNNY STORY.
WHY'D HE PHRASE IT AS A QUESTION?
IT WAS PROBABLY JUST A LUCKY COINCIDENCE.
.....
HM?
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS JUST A SHOW, THAT BUNNY WAS A VERY POPULAR CHARACTER. SO TO SEE HIM SHOT TO DEATH...
...WAS PRETTY SHOCKING FOR MANY OF HIS YOUNG FANS.

WHEN I IMAGINE HOW THOSE KIDS MUST HAVE FELT ...
...I THINK IT WAS VERY KIND OF HIM TO WRAP UP THE CASE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
EVEN THOUGH THE BIG SHOTS AT HQ PROBABLY DIDN'T THINK SO.
I SWEAR ...
.....
SHE'S ALWAYS DOING FLYING KICKS AT HIM...
...YET AT TIMES LIKE THESE, SHE BECOMES SO UNDER-STANDING.
DAKA
DAKA (STOMP)
DAKA

HANEOKAAA!!
BAN (BANG)
THAT BASTARD NARUMI'S WALKING AROUND IN THAT CRAZY COSTUME AGAIN!!
WHAT!?
I THOUGHT I TOOK IT AWAY FROM HIM!
BATA (STOMP)
HOW'D HE GET AHOLD OF THAT!?
AND THIS TIME HE'S SWINGING AROUND A TRIDENT!
BATA
WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS TO ME!?
INSPEC-TOR!!
BATA
OF ALL THE ...!!

THAT MAN'S NAME IS KIYOTAKA NARUMI.

SEEPED IN MYSTERY, HE CONTROLS THE TRUTH.

Spiral THE BONDS OF REASONING 9 THE END

Spiral
THE BONDS OF REASONING

Spiral Work Diary
~THE MYSTERY OF KOUSUKE'S GLASSES~
HOW COME KOU-CHAN'S GLASSES WENT FROM ROUND TO SQUARE-FRAMED?
SUCH A QUES-TION...
...MERITS A TELLING OF THE STORY OF KOUSUKE'S GLASSES.
ORIGINALLY, KOUSUKE'S GLASSES WERE ONLY GOING TO BE FOR SHOW. (THE TRUTH IS...I'D DECIDED THAT MYSELF WITHOUT CONSULTING ANYONE.)
IN FACT, THIS IS THE FIRST DESIGN I DID OF HIM. HIS HAIR WAS GOING TO BE INKED BLACK, AND HIS GLASSES WERE ESTABLISHED TO LOOK LIKE THIS.
IMPOS-TER!

WHEN HE'S WEARING HIS SCHOOL UNIFORM, HE WEARS THE BOX-FRAMED ONES.
WHEN HE'S WEARING CASUAL CLOTHES, IT'S THE OVAL-FRAMED ONES.
SO I DIDN'T JUST DECIDE TO CHANGE HIS GLASSES' STYLE. HE SWITCHES BETWEEN THE TWO DEPENDING ON HIS SITUATION.
WAH!
DASU (SHOVE)
OKAY, SO LET'S JUST SET ASIDE THAT ANCIENT (?) VERSION OF KOUSUKE.
NOWADAYS, HE MAINLY WEARS TWO KINDS OF GLASSES.
OVAL-FRAMED GLASSES AND BOX-FRAMED GLASSES.
NO!!
YOU NEED THESE?
I HAVE A FEELING HE'S GOT PLENTY OF OTHER PAIRS AT HOME.

WELL, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN IN THE NEXT VOLUME!

AFTERWORD

Hello, all you readers. It's me, Kyo Shirodaira. This is Volume 9. And Kanon is still alive and well.

But don't worry, Ayumu's reasoning has found the key to defeating him. In the next volume, he and Kanon will face off, and the victor will be announced. But will Ayumu's ingenuity defeat the invincible Gun with Wings? Stay tuned to find out.

Now, then. *Spiral* is a mystery manga. I know it seems redundant to say so, but it's true.

How's this for proof? In Chapter 45 of this volume, "The Eagle Has Landed," wasn't the procedure Ayumu followed to discover the key to defeating Kanon just like that of a good mystery detective? It wasn't very flashy or grandiose but he reviewed the available data, brought any hidden suspicious or contradictory points to the surface, detected the root cause, and came closer to solving the overall mystery. Those are what I consider to be the most important elements of a mystery.

To be honest, I cannot say that this latest episode had a good structure in terms of a manga. It was too text-heavy, and throughout the whole thing it's just a group of five people disputing that it's not this, that, or the other thing. As a manga, which is supposed to be mainly visual, that was not the best set-up. It was fundamentally the wrong way to do it.

But I believe it was necessary to accurately portray Ayumu's growth and maturation. And though I had to apologize to Mizuno-san, who had to come up with images for all the discourse, I still went through with it. Ayumu had to find the key to Kanon's undoing in that way and no other.

In this arc, Ayumu didn't find his solution through a stroke of genius or from God. He thought out all his options thoroughly and had to claw through the dirt to finally reach it.

Despite Ayumu's feelings of inferiority compared to his brother, I think that the moment he realized the key was the moment he truly felt the value of not giving up in such a hopeless situation—not relying on miracles—the value of opening the door to the next stage with his own strength, and the value in really thinking something through.

I hope that you'll stick around for the next volume—and the ones after that—to find out how that value Ayumu felt will help him grow, how it can bring Kanon down, and how it is connected to the path of solving the Blade Children's mystery which lies just beyond the attack.

And with that, I'll end my message with an apology for my sorry excuses. I guess some things that don't work in manga just don't work. Awww.

Now, then. I have an announcement to make regarding the side story novel that features Kiyotaka Narumi as a detective and has been interrupted several times during its serialization on the GANGAN NET website (http://gangan.square-enx.co.jp/spiral). I'm writing a new one now. This one comes with a bonus quiz present, so please scope it out. *(Editor's note: Site is Japanese-only)*

At any rate, this side story novel that has been released on and off since it's first days of serialization will soon be coming to a close.

And with that, I'll be praying to see you again in Volume 10.

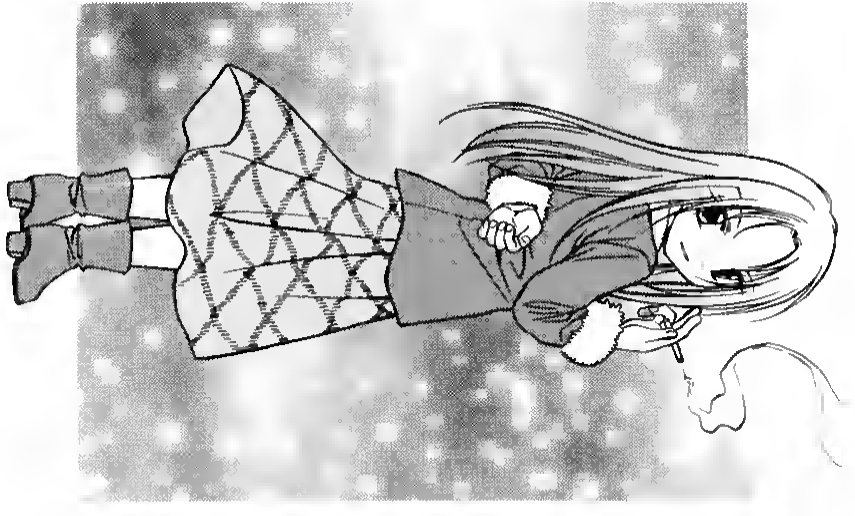
城平京
KYO SHIRODAIRA

Spiral

THE BONDS OF REASONING 9

Omake!

LOOK FOR SPIRAL 10 IN STORES NOW!



SPIRAL
The Bonds of Reasoning ⑨

Kyo Shirodaira
Eita Mizuno

Translation: Christine Dashiell

Lettering: Alexis Eckerman

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

SPIRAL Vol. 9 ©2003 Kyo Shirodaira, Eita Mizuno/SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. First published in Japan in 2003 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. English translation rights arranged with SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD., and Hachette Book Group through Tuttle-Mori Agency, Inc.

Translation ©2009 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD.

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017

www.HachetteBookGroup.com
www.YenPress.com

Yen Press is an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc.
The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of
Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

First Yen Press ebook Edition: April 2014

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-24173-1

App ISBN: 978-0-316-24174-8